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THE CEA CRITIC

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Formerly THE NEWS LETTER of the College English Association

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Bureau of Appointments at Detroit

With Albert Madeira in charge, the CEA Bureau of Appointments will again provide, at the Detroit meetings, facilities for interviews between registrants and prospective employers, to whom the data on candidates will be available. While registrants in this non-profit Bureau are limited to CEA members, any prospective employer is invited to use its services. The Bureau fee for a twelve-month registration period is three dollars. There are no other charges. Registration *does not* guarantee placement.

For the Detroit meetings, the Bureau of Appointments will set up shop in Room 1317, Hotel Statler. Registrants intending to be available for consultation in Detroit should notify Mr. Madeira at their earliest convenience.

CEA members who are not now Bureau registrants, but who wish to avail themselves of the Bureau services, should inform Mr. Madeira at once, remitting at the same time the twelve-month registration fee of $3.00.

Since the job-placement services of the Bureau are open only to CEA members, those who want to register with the Bureau, but who are not now members, should remit, in addition to the $3.00 registration fee, an annual membership fee of $2.50—$1.00 for dues and $1.50 for subscription to THE CEA CRITIC. Those joining the CEA now will be considered as paid up through 1952.

Fall Regional Activities

NECEA

Fall conference, Emerson College, Boston, Oct. 27. Alan McGee, (Mount Holyoke,) president. About one-hundred sixty attended. Officers elected: Norman Pearson (Yale), president; Osborne Earle (Brandeis) and Roberta Grahame (Wellesley), vice-presidents; Howard Bartlett (MIT), secretary-treasurer. Spring meeting, Trinity College, Hartford, Conn. Suggestions for speakers and topics welcomed: to be sent to Program Chairman Ralph Williams, Trinity. Reports and list of directors in December CRITIC.

Rocky Mt. MLA

Informal CEA cooperation, Fifth Annual Conference, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder, Colo., Oct. 19-20. See report in this CRITIC, p. 2, col. 3.

Michigan CEA

Organization Meeting, Mich. State Normal College, Ypsilanti, Nov. 3. Carson C. Hamilton (Mich. State), chairman pro. tem.; Constitution Committee, Thomas R. Dume (Detroit Tech.) and Donald Lloyd (Wayne), chairman.

Middle Atlantic CEA

Fall meeting, Howard Univ., Washington, D.C., Friday evening, Nov. 9. Carl Bode (Univ. of Maryland), president. Theme: "The Instructor Looks at the Teaching of College English."

Hurray for the Idea!

I had known of the possibility that the coming CEA meeting might take up the relation of linguistics and the teaching of English... I can only say hurray for the idea.

ARCHIBALD A. HILL
University of Virginia
(Secretary, Linguistic Society of America)

We are extremely interested in the sessions you have in mind ...

HENRY LEE SMITH JR.
(Director, School of Languages and Linguistics, Foreign Service Institute)

Your idea of having your annual CEA meeting devoted to the topic "Implications of Linguistics for the Teaching of English" seems to me an excellent one...

ROBERT A. HALL JR.
Cornell University
(Division of Modern Languages)

If I decide to come—and I shall be deciding any day now—I shall be glad to take part in the fracas regarding Lloyd's paper on the English language.

S. I. HAYAKAWA
(International Society for General Semantics, Chicago)

I am glad to see that you are considering a plan to take up the possible contributions of linguistics to the teaching of English. Of course, you will already have realized that I cannot very well take part in your discussion at this distance, but I do wish to commend the idea and encourage you to go on with it.

EINAR HAUGEN
(Fulbright Scholar, Oslo, Norway)

California CEA

Fall meeting, Univ. of Calif. at Los Angeles, Nov. 17. Prof. Lionel Stevenson, Univ. of So. Calif., president.

Virginia-North Carolina CEA

Fall meeting, Univ. of Richmond, Nov. 17, 1951. Carrington C. Tutwiler, Jr. (VMI), president. Prof. Frederick A. Pottle will speak on "Boswell Revalued." Prof. Maxwell H. Goldberg will be luncheon speaker. Drawing on his recent visits to Washington, D.C., the Rocky Mt. area, and Texas, he will report on CEA growth and the state of the profession.

New York City-New Jersey CEA

An informal get-together is being arranged by Thomas O. Mabbott (Hunter), Haskell Block (Queens), and Carl Lefevre (Pace).

Time and place: Sat. morning, Dec. 8, Pace College.

ANNUAL CEA MEETING

Detroit — Dec. 27 — 6-9 p.m.

Non-Members Welcome

Over-all charge per plate: $2.75

Place Reservation Promptly

(see box, upper right, this page)

ANNUAL CEA MEETING

THURSDAY, 6 P.M. — DECEMBER 27, 1951

Starlight Room Student Center

Wayne University, Detroit, Michigan

Dinner (informal): $2.75 per plate over-all charge

Open to non-members, who are cordially invited to attend.

Among speakers: Donald Lloyd, author of "Snobs, Slobs, and the English Language," on "Linguistics and the Teaching of English"; Robert A. Hall Jr., professor of Linguistics in the Division of Modern Languages at Cornell, and author of *Leave Your Language Alone*, on "The Contributions of General Linguistics to the Teaching of Language".

Among other topics: "Assessing the Damage Caused by the Current Crisis in the Profession," and "Charting a Future Course", speaker, Raymond F. Howes, American Council on Education.

Master of Ceremonies, Levette J. Davidson (Univ. of Denver).

Moderator: Albert H. Marckwardt (Univ. of Mich.), Chairman Committee on Linguistic Geography of America (American Dialect Society).

Reservations will be placed in order of arrival. They should be addressed, with accompanying remittance of $2.75, to:

"Reservations"
CEA Headquarters
Room 1317, Hotel Statler
Detroit, Mich.

Our final specification of number to be served must be made on December 10. Hence reservations must arrive before that date. Reservations will be honored in order of their arrival. We cannot guarantee to fill reservations coming in after December 9.

Linguisticians Spoiling for a Fight

Every issue of THE CRITIC is lively and getting livelier as you open your columns to the new linguists, who are, I gather, spoiling for a fight. They are a strangely voluble lot and masters of the *argumentum ad hominem*. I think that they should treat ignorance with more gentleness and patience. After all, none of the new linguists is young enough to have escaped a brush with ignorance at a formative time in his life. Judging from what I have read of their polemics, I should say that that ol' debbil — the eighteenth-century authoritarian — is going to haunt them the rest of their lives. What will happen to those who are submitted only to the new enlightenment is another question. Without benefit of any contact with ignorance they are likely to sink out of sight.

Fortunately, there is plenty of ignorance to go around, and the stock is not likely to run out for a while. "An unholy number of people" still "make it their business to correct the speech and writing of others." It is a motley crew made up of "authors, scholars, business men, librarians," and educated people of all sorts. Mr. Lloyd, who offers this list in his elegantly entitled "Snobs, Slobs, and the English Language," modestly omitted the one class which is most devoted to correcting the speech and writing of others. I refer of course to linguisticians. Here is a really dedicated group. Indeed, if one reads much of their pleadings, he is likely to go behind the barn the next time he wants to say "It is I."

But apparently people are not reading what the new linguists have to say, or, if they do read, they are confused by what they find. And little wonder! Linguisticians (blame Professor Hall for that word) say that they are scientists, and with important reservations, one may readily agree that they are. True scientists, however, should cultivate more objectivity, more respect for negative evidence, and better techniques for uncovering it. They should treat all influences on language as legitimate —legitimate, that is, so far as they, the scientists, are concerned. They should not ecstasize over folksy language and vituperate at elegancies.

Professor Stockwell is surprised that *Leave Your Language Alone!* has been ignored. Perhaps everyone is simply taking Professor Hall's advice. Professor Hall, however, merely meant that everyone should leave his language alone except the linguistician. The linguistician can say on page 6 that "There is no such thing as . . . correct or incorrect . . . in language" and thereby remind the reader that on page 2 he — the same author — had said that "*it's me* is normal and absolutely correct English." He can quote, harmlessly enough, the following lyric and suggest, erroneously I am sure, that the last line describes the way the folk *talk*!

Folks are dumb where I come from
They ain't had any learnin';
Still they are happy as can be,
Doin' what comes natur'lly.

As I have said, it is all very confusing.

KENNETH KNICKERBOCKER
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, Tenn.

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Birthday Greetings

Birthdays, with organizations as with individuals, can be the occasion for either rejoicing over increasing vigor, or sadness over growing senility. It is a pleasure to report to the College English Association, therefore, that at the age of fifty years the New England Association of Teachers of English seems quite sturdy, and likely to flourish for another half century. And it is a pleasure, under such circumstances, to wish the New England Association many more such anniversaries as the one they have been celebrating.

As it is one of the oldest societies interested primarily in the teaching of English, the influence of the NEATE (as it is sometimes called, "for short") has extended far beyond the geographical limits of New England. It has served as a model for several similar regional organizations, and its magazine, *The English Leaflet*, has stimulated a number of other magazines for teachers, and now goes itself to over thirty states and foreign countries. And the association's intellectual activity and interests have been equally far-reaching. I can mention here only a few that are of special interest to college teachers, but anyone interested in the teaching of English in general will enjoy, I think, Miss Mildred Grimes's account of the last twenty-five years of the association's history, printed in the *Leaflet* for February 1951.

Because the NEATE has always had a regrettably small proportion of its membership drawn from college teachers, it has not felt able to devote as much time in its meetings or space in its publication to topics of interest primarily to this group — certainly not as much as can the College English Association. Instead it has made its contribution to them through a consideration of the problems for which its membership best fitted it — those in which both elementary or secondary school and college teachers were concerned. For example, from the early days of the College Entrance Examination Board, the NEATE has collaborated with it in many projects.

And in fields of interest to all teachers of English the Association has ever been alive and helpful. Since 1931 it has been discussing, off and on, the implications to teachers of the growing international quality of the English language, although most of us have been aware of it only since the end of World War II. And many other topics which we today take for granted, and whose beginnings we have forgotten, were first introduced to many college teachers through the meetings of the association or through the *Leaflet*: remedial reading, the work of I. A. Richards, the growth of a more liberal attitude toward grammar are just a few which concern teachers at all levels.

Though many of the members of the College English Association are not members of the New England Association of Teachers of English, we have all benefited from its endeavors, past and present, so that I am sure that we all join in wishing it continued health, prosperity, and activity.

RALPH M. WILLIAMS
Trinity College
Hartford, Conn.

(Prof. Williams is past secretary of the NEATE.)

Rocky Mountain MLA

The fifth annual conference of the Rocky Mountain MLA was held, Oct. 19-20, at the University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado. National CEA director T. M. Pearce, Univ. of New Mexico, was luncheon toastmaster, and Max Goldberg, who brought MLA greetings from Bill Parker, was luncheon speaker. The national CEA secretary participated also, as speaker, in the Saturday morning session on the teaching of English. He spoke on "Current Trends and Problems."

In the business meeting, Dr. Stuart Cuthbertson, Univ. of Colorado, president of the Rocky Mountain MLA, expressed appreciation for the participation of the national CEA secretary in the conference sessions. The meeting acted favorably on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, which proposed explicit CEA cooperation in future Rocky Mt. MLA conferences—specifically in the session on the teaching of English. (Details of this cooperative relationship have been worked out.)

The following officers were elected for the coming year: Alfred R. Westfall, Colorado A and M, president; Lewis Mansfield Knapp, Colorado College, vice president; (Mrs.) Etholine Grigsby Aycock, Colorado A and M, secretary; Ernest Warnock Tedlock, Jr., editor, Rocky Mt. MLA *Bulletin*.

Group leaders were elected as follows: Marjorie Kimmerle, Univ. of Colorado, Linguistic Atlas of America; Robert D. Thornton, Univ. of Colorado, English I—English before 1800; Alan Swallow, Univ. of Denver, English II—English after 1800; vice-chairman, same group, John W. Morrison, Univ. of Nevada; Allan Hubbell, Univ. of Denver, English III—Teaching; George Arms, Univ. of New Mexico, English IV—American Literature; vice chairman, same group, Thomas Burnham, Colo. State College of Education. Bruce Grainger, University of Denver, was designated chairman of the Rocky Mt. MLA Committee on American Studies, newly formed at a luncheon of October 20.

Inclusion of the Univ. of Nebraska within the Rocky Mt. MLA area was confirmed, and this year's delegates were cordially welcomed.

The sixth Annual Meeting of the Rocky Mt. MLA will be held at Colorado A and M, Fort Collins, date to be announced.

A notable feature of the hospitality of the local committee was the morning collation with which the delegates were greeted—especially the heaps of strawberries surrounding bowls of powdered sugar.

In The Wake

William Peery's "Invitation to the Wake" (THE CEA CRITIC, September 1951) has appeared, as "The Joys of Finnegans Hearseplay," in "The Book News" section of *The Daily Times Herald*, Dallas, Texas. This was first presented at the 1951 sessions of the Texas College Conference of Teachers of English. The same issue of the *Times Herald* contained "James Joyce, Either Artist or Influence," by Kenneth Rockwell, who concludes thus:

"James Joyce probably is not a giant of letters but a gigantic influence upon writers. His writin will remain playthings for scholar but as long as they play wi *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* joyfully and cleverly as can Wi liam Peery, of the University Texas, whose essay on Joyce printed here today, there is hope f the ordinary man and woman i terested in the development literature.

"But, alas, the William Peery are few and far between. Writer on Joyce seem to lack either play fulness or humor. They invariabl approach him whom they regard the "master" with an only too dead ly seriousness. They seem to hav wandered into Joyce's world o dreams and found neither laughte nor a way out."

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The CEA Abroad

Chaucer for Liberians?

A generous response to my letter in the September 1950 CRITIC encourages me to apply to your members for help with another problem.

Our scholarship committee is working on a revision of the upper division curriculum for students with a major in English and Languages. Cuttington College is small, and because of the limited student body and faculty we cannot offer a major in English alone. The present junior class has completed two years of Latin or French (Liberia is surrounded on the east and south by French West Africa), freshman composition, and the survey of English literature. These third-year students are continuing one of the foreign languages studied during the lower division years and commencing another. A year course in American literature is also added.

The immediate problem is to decide upon the additional courses required in English for the last three semesters. We ought to offer another eighteen units. The simplest plan would be to follow the typical list of classes now assigned to students in American colleges who have a minor in English. Our hesitancy in adopting this procedure comes from the peculiar needs of West African students. We would question, for example, the advisability of requiring first-generation English-speaking students to take a full semester of Middle English or Old English, or even of concentrating during one semester on a particular period in English literature. Can not some way be found of widening their knowledge and appreciation of this language and literature of ours (and, by law, of theirs too) and at the same time of avoiding specialization?

Undoubtedly many CEA members will wonder at the objection to the language and literature of Chaucer when Latin is offered at least two years. There is only one answer: The classical tradition in education is thoroughly entrenched in West Africa, and the best we can do is try to adapt it to this rapidly developing civilization. But this is a problem all of its own.

If any CRITIC readers have had experience in teaching college English to students with foreign backgrounds, or have any suggestions on types of courses which might help us, we would be grateful to hear from them.

W. R. HUGHES
Suakoka, Liberia

CEA As Santa Claus

Perhaps you would like a note from another part of the world. And I in turn, would like to tell you how much the CEA CRITIC has meant to me and many others this past year out here in the Philippines. Unfortunately I missed the February and March issues, but the ones I have received have been given hard use by the teachers here who are hungry for professional association and stimulation.

I brought some of my favorite Chap Books out with me and Gelett Burgess' "Short Words Are Words of Might" has been read and discussed by a good many teachers' seminars. Since short English words are often held in disrepute by Filipinos (they prefer words with seventeen syllables!) you can understand how grateful I am to Mr. Burgess for presenting the case for "short words" so effectively.

The April CEA CRITIC has brought encouragement to many teachers of English out here who are beginning to realize that many of *their* problems are not always peculiar to *their* classes but are problems of all classes and teachers everywhere that English is taught. Of special interest were "Milton As A Readable Great' and the three articles on page five. Would they had been longer, particularly the one by Ernest Van Keuren! And another delightful glimpse of Burges Johnson in "Gibberings from a Friendly Ghost." Did he write it for the Philippines? Well, never mind. The shoe fits and we are all willing to wear it.

English is the medium of instruction here in the Islands, but it is not the natural language of the people. There are many dialects, distinctively different, spoken almost entirely in the home. To complicate the problem still further, there is a determined attempt (met with equally determined hostility in certain areas) to develop one of these dialects as the national language. It is now a mandatory subject for all children from Grade 1. Of course Spanish, too, has its place here. Therefore the teacher of English has not only the problems usual to that subject but in addition the problem of several languages competing for first place and in some quarters a special hostility toward English for certain definite reasons.

To make life even more difficult, text books and all teaching materials are limited because of the Import Control Act. Consequently, teachers are really thrown on their own resources. And the teachers in the Philippines are no different from teachers elsewhere: some are very good, many are mediocre, and too few have developed the needed resources to meet a very complicated problem.

But the situation is extremely interesting—and very challenging. As a Smith-Mundt Professor under the State Department, I have had the opportunity of traveling throughout the Islands, meeting and talking with hundreds of teachers of English. Because of the long Occupation period when education was practically stopped, Filipinos today have an avid thirst for schooling. Many unscrupulous people have been quick to take advantage of the situation and the number of colleges "operating" here now is fantastic. There are more than one hundred in Manila alone. And it is indeed a poor town that can not muster up at least a half dozen "institutions of higher learning."

The problem is to raise the standards and establish some kind of uniformity at the various educational levels. Teaching is a job here and the teachers work at it on an hourly basis with strong scruples about overtime or homework. But there are some bright spots and some good people who are assuming educational leadership. Changes are in progress, though sometimes we impatiently wish they could be more rapid.

The first Conference of College Teachers of English was held last March, and I am setting up the second National Conference before I leave in November. We are using the College English Association as our guiding star. We hope to start a News Letter this Fall.

Now you see why I felt I wanted to write you. To express appreciation for the valuable assistance you have given us, for the ideals you have set before us, and to make a plea for any ideas or material you can send us. Any Chap Books (and the May issue of THE CRITIC), any suggestions for our Fall program will be most gratefully received and a check promptly forwarded for any expense incurred. We have *nothing* to work with here.

Next February I shall be back in Brooklyn College and attending the meetings in person. Until then I send my good wishes to the CEA, and especially to THE CRITIC.

GRACE STUART NUTLEY, PH. D.
The United States Educational Foundation in the Philippines

Thank you for your most encouraging note. I have shared it with the members of the Executive Committee and they are very enthusiastic.

I think you would feel as if you were Santa Claus concluding a most successful Christmas season if you could see the enthusiasm and the glow that your card produced. Education here is still suffering from the effects of the war and the teachers are so dreadfully isolated and so hungry for professional stimulation—and participation.

Thank you again for the boost you have given us. I hope that I may meet you some day and tell you personally just what this means to every one of us out here where we are struggling for standards against insuperable odds.

GRACE STUART NUTLEY

(Editor's Note: The requested CRITIC copies and Chap Books have been sent off, via air mail and express, with the compliments of the College English Association.)

"Pure science is tolerated because it is suspected that it may contain implications useful for warfare. Psychology and economics are permitted because it is hoped that the former may teach us how to beguile the enemy successfully into treason or cowardice, the latter because it may teach us how to capture or destroy the materials vital to the enemy's defense. But the historian, the student of language and literature, and especially that human gadfly the philosopher, are not encouraged. They are not essential to defense. They are merely essential to civilization."

According to the College and University *Bulletin* (III, No. 8, April, 1951), Prof. George Boas (John Hopkins) presented the "highlight of the symposium" on "Higher Education and Long-Range National Security." The quotation is from his address, "The Humanities and Defense."

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I'VE BEEN READING

J. GORDON EAKER, Literary Editor
217 Audley Street, South Orange, N.J.

Americana

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Selected Tales and Sketches*, Edited, with an Introduction by Hyatt H. Waggoner; Herman Melville, *Selected Tales and Poems*, Edited, with an Introduction, by Richard Chase; Henry James, *Selected Short Stories*, Edited, with an Introduction, by Quentin Anderson; Stephen Crane, *Selected Prose and Poetry*, Edited, with an Introduction, by William M. Gibson; Edgar Allen Poe, *Selected Prose and Poetry*, Edited, with an Introduction, by W. H. Auden; Washington Irving, *Selected Prose*, Edited, with an Introduction, by Stanley T. Williams (Rinehart, 1950).

On the average these paperbound Rinehart editions offer to the student of American literature a discriminating selection of important writings generally available only in the collected works of the respective authors. Not only do these volumes help to compensate for the inadequacies of the many small college libraries in the country but they also enable the teacher to focus on a wider segment of material, a privilege that he has gradually been deprived of by departmental addiction to surveys necessitating the use of the all-embracing anthology of national literature. Perhaps this latter practice is no serious crime on the undergraduate level, but its prevalence in graduate courses defeats the entire logic of the highest education. Thus, editions of this sort may strengthen the sagging foundations of many optimistic English programs.

Outstanding in this group of books is Waggoner's collection of Hawthorne's tales and sketches. While the choice of the short stories may not appear to be unusual, their integral connection with the sketches, particularly "The Haunted Mind" and "Fancy's Show Box" which contain startling revelations of Hawthorne's creative method, and with the editor's challenging introduction, warrants a critical accolade. And in calling attention to the crucial function of recurrent imagery, Waggoner points the way toward a clearer understanding of the symbolic dimensions of Hawthorne's art. I might add that this critical innovation may be the harbinger of a rewarding genetic study of both the latter's artistic and moral development.

Richard Chase's edition of Melville is perhaps no less admirable. Even though one may question the heavy emphasis of the introduction on the autobiographical implications of the collection, the approach is deeply provocative. Not so, to my mind, are Chase's speculations on *Billy Budd*. The thematic relation of this story to certain works of Sophocles and Shakespeare is not entirely valid, for similar parallels can be established in other literary compositions known to Melville. On the other hand, Melville's sexual preoccupations in both his prose and poetry are sensitively interpreted. However, Chase's comments on the sexual overtones of "After the Pleasure Party" are perhaps a bit arbitrary. Sexuality is double-bladed. With satiety may come a depletion of inspiration, with unfulfillment a sublimated flowering of the creative urges. What the artist most often fears — a case in point is Goethe — is submission to a mistress less meaningful than his art.

Though Anderson's selection of James's short stories leaves little to be desired, his introduction, unlike the others, is in deplorable taste. He uses the allotted space to argue the merits of a thesis relating James's moral ideas to his father's theology. I do not deny that this may be a discovery of interest to the teacher of James, but the student must first be considered. It is the editor's primary task to provide him with a broader orientation into these difficult stories. The several paragraphs devoted to the refutation of certain statements by Leavis may have been more profitably utilized directing the student to *The Art of the Novel*, a work no less indispensable than his critical hobbyhorse.

The collection of Stephen Crane's prose and poetry is ably edited by Gibson, and the introduction, by contrast with the others, stresses sound historical criticism. The inclusion of *Maggie* and "The Open Boat" are particularly welcome. Crane's first novel clarifies the development of his narrative technique in *The Red Badge of Courage*, the work most often studied in the classroom; the short story, adapted from the author's newspaper account of his own experience of shipwreck (also included in the collection), sheds considerable light on his transcription of reality into imaginative terms. Gibson's remarks on Crane's poetry, linking it organically to his prose, are highly preceptive and round out a volume of uniform excellence.

The discriminations of a poet are immediately evident in Auden's anthology of Poe. The introduction conveniently categorizes Poe's short stories, isolates the problems of his poetic discipline, and evaluates the intentions of his criticism. All this is done with exquisite simplicity and irresistible persuasion. Moreover, Auden adds a succulent plum to the ordinary fare of Poe's anthologized writings, the long and absorbing adventure yarn, *The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym*. He also includes *Eureka*, a poem written in prose which, because of its remarkable intuitions into subsequent discoveries in science, is worth knowing. Offhand I would say that this collection will permit the teacher to present a more balanced appraisal of Poe to his students, while at the same time it will generate considerable interest on its own merits.

Cook's lucid introduction perfectly supplements his selection of Emerson's prose and poetry. Almost everything that proves Emerson's claim to the title of a representative American writer and thinker is found, including excerpts from his journals. Counter-balancing the intense idealism of essays like "Self-Reliance" and "Compensation" are earth-stained writings like "Fate" and "Experience." Cook applies the same polarized perspective to his choice of the poetry and the journal entries, and he leaves one with the impression that Emerson was indeed "equally at home with potato-disease and original sin, with pegging shoes and the Over-Soul." In short, this is the type of collection that neutralizes some of the inescapable exaggerations that occur in the giant comprehensive anthologies.

In much the same manner Williams's edition of Irving's prose achieves its high quality. The introduction and the selections blend together into something resembling a unified whole. Out of the fusion emerges the outline of the man as an artist. To the degree possible, an editor should strive for this ideal. With the one exception noted, these collections, within their obvious limits, respect this injunction.

WILLIAM BYSSHE STEIN
Washington and Jefferson College
Washington, Pa.

Emerson's Thing of Beauty

Spires of Form: A Study of Emerson's Aesthetic Theory. By Vivian C. Hopkins. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1951. $4.00.

The lay-out of this book imposes a structure on Emerson's fugitive comments on art and literature which greatly assists a modern reader to see and understand an aspect of Emerson's gospel of perhaps greater current appeal than the foamy Transcendentalism in which it has been misted. Besides and Introduction and Conclusion, it consists of three impressive chapters which systematically present Emerson's idea of the creative process, his application of it as a critical norm, and his own responses to art as acts of enjoyment, rather than as irrelevant judicial pronunciamentoes. Chapter I ("The creative Process") develops with steady skill the idea of art as "saying" rather than as "communicating" a strong idea: the artist is enriched from a source external to himself, so that, in obedience to the "inflowing" he becomes an agency not subjected to the dictates of "the social value of the arts." Chapter II ("The Work of Art") expatiates upon organic form, noting Emerson's independent looting of the idea and his original application from Plotinus, Goethe, and Coleridge. Chapter III ("Aesthetic Experience") is an exercise interpreting Emerson's own responses to art, buttressed by convincing quotations from his published work and unpublished memoranda.

Emerson's aesthetic rested upon a metaphysic of Greek idealism altered by Christian and German revisions. As a metaphysician, he was an inspiriting poet, exciting the vapors of an uninhibited self rooted in a benevolent pantheism. As a poet of edifying insights, his transcendental version of Truth rested, and still rests, upon the hospitable and sympathetic mood of a reader. Without that mood, even a flash of scepticism, the Transcendentalism becomes merely historically interesting as a transitional phase from Unitarianism to Pragmatism. Miss Hopkins's *Spires of Form* fails to relate its title to the contents of her book: the nearest it comes to doing so shifts the word "spires" to "spirals," so that an architectural metaphor becomes something quite different in a geometrical metaphor: is a "spire" a "spiral"? Yet the book notably succeeds in aligning Emerson's aesthetic to that which seems to prevail today. By indicating correspondences of Emerson's aesthetic with that of representative critics like Richards, Tate, and Edman, it compels a re-interpretation of Emerson for usable catharses of current incompletions in aesthetic criticism. *Spires of Form* is a richly rewarding study, provoking a re-reading and re-thinking of Emerson as an American thinker whose insights may well deliver contemporary readers from cloacal obsessions so manifest in today's art and literature and their accompanying critical commentaries.

WILLIAM S. KNICKERBOCKER
Emerson College
Boston, Mass.

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I've Been Reading (Continued)

Kingdom of the Mind

Liberties of the Mind by Charles Morgan. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1951. $2.75.

The English novelist, Charles Morgan, shows the intimate nexus of mind and imagination in this quietly-written but greatly moving book urging the renewal of personal faith in the "liberties of the mind": the liberty not to despair, to build, to teach, to have roots, to enjoy and accept. It reveals the basis of a new romanticism, somewhat like that of Hugh l'Anson Fausset's cleansed of the waywardnesses of the whirligigs of passion, and proposes a program of healthy spiritual expression in worthy works of art. It re-affirms the dignity of the individual and the pressing necessity of the individual's surmounting the tensions engendered by conflicts of the daily din and ominous inroads of forced aphasias through ideologies. It offers no defeatist remedy for "peace of mind" through resignation and surrender but earnestly recommends that struggle for righteousness (interpreted as beauty, justice, charity, and truth) of which peace is the fruit. Hence, this plea for renewal of self is indeed timely in a day whose prime duty is to withstand the sophistries, distortions, and ugly threats which poison the air and suffocate the will to adequate life.

WILLIAM S. KNICKERBOCKER
Emerson College
Boston, Mass.

THE CEA CRITIC for September has just reached me, and it seems to be a particularly good one. I am very much interested to see there the announcement of the November meeting of the Virginia-North Carolina CEA. I wonder if you could take the time to tell me what members the CEA has at North Carolina and at Duke.

ROBERT A. PRATT
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill

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Babbitt vs. Dewey

Our Educational Discontents: Essays in Defense of the Humanities. By Percy H. Houston. Boston: Christopher Publishing House. 1951. $2.75.

With both perception and passion, wit and good humor, Dr. Percy H. Houston of Occidental College, long-practiced English professor, considers *Our Educational Discontents* and urges "a genuinely humanistic education with its roots in the past as well as in the present."

In this tightly-structured little book, the critic takes a look at contemporary education in the secondary schools, colleges, and graduate schools, and comments boldly upon what he considers the nature and lamentable effects of our progressive-pragmatic pedagogy. He proposes both generally and in some detail a schooling in the humanities as most likely to produce mature, disciplined, critical minds and personalities.

It is not necessary here to summarize our educational discontents as Houston sees them. "Too many children have revealed flabby minds, with no particular sum of knowledge which they can call upon at will, and with dispositions made arrogant and self assertive as the result of unwise use of liberty granted at too young an age." And he proceeds step by step to "the well-nigh universal censure of college teaching and the complaint voiced by the student that the gentlemen on the other side of the classroom desk are not interested in his problems and could not therefore if they would exercise any real influence upon his life."

Dr. Houston's positive call is for a humanistic education with a center of "sound discipline." He decries the decrease of foreign language translation and mathematics in the school curricula. He is "bold to say that the only genuine discipline the student can be sure of acquiring is upon the athletic field." He holds no brief for non-functional grammar, but he proposes a more rigorous program of critical reading and writing and literary studies that will enforce the habits of discrimination and definition.

There are good and useful advices here for the teacher of college English:

> I have ... found it profitable never to engage in a discussion [with students] without somewhere having expressed my own true opinion of the subject at hand.
>
> The teacher must remember, if he is to acquire the proper kind of classroom humility, that before him are one or more potentially better men than he.
>
> Neither intellectual arrogance nor dogmatic assertion nor the mere authority of the printed page has any place in the classroom; rather a direct contact with ideas and the creative imagination that will build up the inner life of both teacher and pupil.
>
> The renowned Socratic method, of "vexatious interrogation," now comes into play.
>
> No names should be mentioned in either lecture or recitation without some direct contact with what these names should mean to the mind of the student.

These "Essays in Defense of the Humanities," as they are subtitled, are not only an orderly analysis and exposition, they are structured in a second sense. Here are the elements of drama: hero-protagonist Babbitt (Irving, NOT George F.) and villain-antagonist Dewey (John, NOT Thomas E.). One catches glimpses of a titanic educational struggle, with whatever-gods-may-be a party to the conflict. And if, indeed, the Freytagian climax is behind us and we approach an inevitable catastrophe, these essays (in a momentary fourth-act pause) offer a ray of hope. And there are some observers who are ready enough to point out a tragic flaw in the protagonist.

In one of the closing essays, "Irving Babbitt, Man and Teacher," Houston pictures warmly the Babbitt and Kittredge of his own graduate days at Harvard and reads their symbolism. Both men he sincerely respected, but one of them he loved and followed, and he takes the occasion of these published *Discontents* to speak once more his debt and gratitude.

Concluding, he comes to "the selection and the training of the right sort of teachers," and he sets forth five problems: first, "how to provide properly qualified teachers with sufficient remuneration for their services to attract competent minds"; second, "how to inspire teachers to regard their careers as a dedication to the upbuilding of young people entrusted to their care"; third, "the guardianship of our precious heritage of freedom of thought"; fourth, the problem of love — "love of learning and love of one's fellows"; and finally, " the problem of experiment . . . to live dangerously with our intellectual faculties sharpened to a razor edge . . . a dynamic quality."

Though all of us will not agree upon the solutions proposed, most of us share these educational discontents. Those of us whose minds the Teacher Houston has touched —through his years of classroom teaching, through his textbooks (*Types of World Literature* and *Main Currents of English Literature*), through his scholarship. (*Dr. Johnson* and miscellaneous studies), through his friendship and acquaintance — will welcome this clear statement of his educational philosophy, and will discuss it with others.

CHARLES W. COOPER
Whittier College
Whittier, Calif.

ACLS Faculty Study Fellowships 1952-53

To provide opportunities for individual scholars to enlarge the range of their knowledge by study in fields outside their special interests and thus become better interpreters of significantly broad aspects of humanistic studies, the ACLS offers a number of Faculty Study Fellowships. Requests for Nomination Forms and for information should be addressed to the Secretary for Fellowships, American Council of Learned Societies, 1219 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C. Completed nominations for awards during the next academic year must be received by December 17. Awards will be announced by April 15.

Cal. CEA Symposium In Harvard Review

The *Harvard Educational Review* for Spring, 1951 (XXI, No. 2) gives a commentary (pp. 120-123) on the California CEA symposium on General Education (Whittier College, Albert W. Upton, then regional CEA president). This is found in a critique of Julian Harris' *The Humanities, an Appraisal* (University of Wisconsin, 1950). The reviewer is Charles Cooper. In what the editors call "delightfully intricate language," Prof Cooper writes, in part:

"One measure of such symposia is the extent to which words report deeds — work in progress, recent trials and errors, solid accomplishment. Certainly the CEA papers and participants reflected a considerable activity in the Southern California region.

"Among most of the four-year liberal arts colleges of Southern California, experimental curricula are now in being, general education with emphasis upon the humanities in one sense or another. Not only is this so at Scripps College and Whittier College, as mentioned, but at Occidental College, Redlands University, and Claremont Men's College. And both the University of Southern California and the University of California at Los Angeles have committees at work and integrated or humanities courses in the experimental stage of development. The state colleges and the junior colleges are subject to somewhat special conditions, demands for vocational or terminal training, and pressures from the State Department of Education, the State University, and local groups. These public colleges have not yet, as far as this reviewer has observed, experimented so widely in developing General Education in the humanistic tradition."

Technologists Pro Humanities

In a *Collier's* article of early June, Alfred B. Sloan, Jr., president of General Motors and distinguished MIT alumnus, argues that "Big Business Must Help our Colleges." He admits that to "justify corporate support of liberal-arts institutions which are more concerned with the social sciences and the humanities is perhaps more difficult" than to justify it "in the area of the natural sciences, the investigation of our physical laws." He adds, however, that he "feels strongly" that the social sciences and the humanities "are highly important even if they are not directly related to the field of production." Designating these subjects as the "second area of fundamental knowledge," he goes so far as to say that he believes this area "will have a far more significant bearing in shaping the pattern of our future society than in the past."

In his June 1951 commencement address at Williston Academy (Easthampton, Mass.), Dr. James Rhyne Killian, president of MIT, declared: "As the representative of a professional school, it is my belief and that of my associates that, in the modern world of turmoil and strife in which we live, it is essential that our educated people, particularly our professional people, acquire the broadest possible understanding of modern society, of how it works, and of how it fails to work."

The Humanities and the Law

Dr. Earl J. McGrath, U.S. Commissioner of Education, at the dedication ceremonies of the new Law Center of New York University, Sept. 15, 1951, spoke on "The Humanities and the Law." Regrettably, limited space prevents presentation of more than the following in this issue of THE CEA CRITIC:

First, consider the part which the humanities can play in improving the basic skills of communication. A man's ability to speak and write clearly means his ability to convey his thoughts to his fellow men. Leaders in any field are likely to be skilled in clear and vigorous expression. In the practice of the lawyer's craft, proficiency in the use of language is most essential — whether preparing a brief, serving as advocate in the courtroom, designing the statutory law, or rendering a decision from the bench. For all of these professional activities require the systematic ordering of thoughts, close reasoning, and nice discrimination among alternatives.

Those who are able to master a colorful style, in addition to the simple skills required for plain and concise exposition, add even more to the strength of their argument. And within limits, such abilities can be acquired by those who are willing to spend the time. Laziness is the chief cause of inexact expression. The ability to use polished and striking language is certainly worth the effort required. Who will deny that a provocative phrase or an apt quotation adds to clarity and persuasiveness? When Justice Holmes said, "This notion . . . somehow breathes from the pores of the act," and when Chief Justice Marshall said in his famous *McCulloch vs. Maryland opinion*, " . . not much less idle than to hold a lighted taper to the sun," they were not only adding vigor to their statements but also weight and dignity to their arguments. But whether or not the lawyer will work toward a subtle style, he dare not fail to master the elementary principles of grammar and rhetoric needed to make his ideas understandable. Unless he can do this he will be forever at the mercy of his own disordered thoughts and the eloquence of his opponents.

Hence, it is important that he study languages and literatures, those subjects which teach the skillful use of tongue and pen. Normally each college student takes courses in English designed to help him speak and write with precision. Frequently he studies also at least one foreign tongue, and thus acquires greater knowledge of the nature of language and its proper uses. Moreover, the widely required study of English literary masterpieces aids in the refinement of ideas, the growth of vocabulary, and the use of effective idiom. These qualities of expression are further enhanced among students who master a foreign language sufficiently to read its best literature.

The case for the study of English and foreign languages and literatures as elements in an educational program aimed to cultivate the skills of expression appears to me incontestable. But dissatisfaction with the writing and speaking habits of college students is nearly universal. It is recognized that many college students cannot use their own language with even the most elementary accuracy, that their vocabulary is limited, that they lack an understanding of grammar and sentence structure, and that their appreciation of simple, clear prose is undeveloped.

Facing the need for more functional instruction in written and oral expression, many colleges and universities have made fundamental changes in English courses to repair the existing inadequacies. They have also instituted testing programs to determine whether or not the student can apply his theoretical knowledge to practical situations where speech and writing are required. These promising developments, as they spread, will doubtless raise the general standard of English usage among college graduates. But the improvement will be slow unless the teachers of other subjects, in the colleges and in the professional schools, play a larger part in this effort to improve our language habits. The instruction in the language departments in our educational institutions is, I am confident, as good on the average as it is in other fields. But there is a notorious unwillingness among other teachers to take any responsibility in the matter. Real improvement will come only when all educators require the skillful and precise use of language. Law schools can help in two ways: demand that those who apply for admission show their proficiency in written and spoken discourse, and insist throughout the years of law school that their students exercise these skills. The faculties of law schools, who know so well the value of such training, should join their colleagues in the liberal arts colleges in a persistent effort to improve the ability of students to use their own tongue effectively.

A second contribution which the humanities can make to the education of the lawyer is related to the thinking processes employed in the humane disciplines. History, philosophy, literature — these subjects should require students to reflect upon the basic issues of human life which have challenged men through the ages — issues and problems to which there is no pat answer but which all thoughtful men must consider. Such consideration involves rigorous thinking, serious and prolonged reflection — not day-dreaming or the free association of ideas. It is an intellectual operation which must be learned through hard work and the stern rejection of lazy intellectual habits and obstructive prejudices.

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The Lady's Not For Finding

Though I enjoyed and valued Cleanth Brooks' article in the October 1950 CRITIC, especially for its information, I could not help noting that neither he nor Mr. Wimsatt makes reference to any absolute appraisal of poetry. There is talk of criticism, literary history, biography, historical considerations, anti-intentionalism (must we, Mr. Wimsatt?); but of sheer canonical judgment hardly even an implication.

It is this "overlooking the poetry itself" through the diversion of looking for something else, that doubtless demanded that Mr. Brooks find a hero-heroine set-up in Sara Teasdale's "When I am dead," when none was intended (at least from the context). We are all too disposed to make poetry exist for scholarship, not scholarship for poetry; while the footnote in some instances is pushing the text, almost literally, off the page.

Is it measurably true to say that we no longer look for poetry? Would a better word for the New Criticism (which is Eden-old) be "evasionist"? One can beg the question of poetry even with scholarship — that rare and precious thing — just as one can be moronic through knowledge — "debauched with learning," in Berkeley's phrase. An eminent scholar has opined that T. S. Eliot has not written a line of poetry. Good heavens, what does the man expect nowadays? "The poetry does not matter."

I believe that poetry is, quite definitely, the language of Reality, beside which even the formulae of an Einstein are so much doodling. Poetry is the vernacular of the heart, and of our native place. But we have partly forgotten our Mother tongue, and have wandered from Home. What the connection is between our spiritual aberration and our poetic defection I am not clever enough to say; but that the connection is intimate is very certain. Is our epitaph being written — "They began as poets"?

(My mind reproaches itself for such a lapse of faith; for have we actually begun? Is even Shakespeare's best — always a little approximate — any more than a stab? Could we not be in the throes of a renascence that might pale even the Elizabethan noontide? Certainly the kenosis preparatory to such a reflushing of the human heart is taking place to the extent that we are being charmed with fear, and beguiled into Receivership — a Receivership which rips off the fine feathers of our self-solvency and shows what a beggarly thing it really is.)

A. E. JOHNSON
Syracuse University
Syracuse, N. Y.

Personals

The Denver University Press announces the publication, Nov. 1, of Levette Davidson's *Poems of the Old West: A Rocky Mountain Anthology*. Among the Davidson books published by the same press is *A Guide to American Folklore* (1951). Each summer Dr. Davidson directs the Western Folklore Conference, at the University of Denver.

Haskell Block, Queens College, and member of the committee arranging the New York City area CEA get-together, gave a paper in Iowa City, before the American Society for Aesthetics, on the subject "Cultural Anthropology and Contemporary Literary Criticism."

Carl Lefevre, member of the same committee, is now head of the English Department at Pace College (New York City).

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It was the general purpose of the book that won such wide acceptance for the first edition. One could quarrel with details of interpretation, but not with the basic aim of the text. Thus, one could take exception to the hostility to the romantic poets and the consequent emphasis on poets of a more "metaphysical" talent. What seemed an excessive stress on irony, paradox and understatement created in the minds of some teachers the impression that the editors were, perhaps unconsciously, attempting to impose upon the undergraduate reader the standards of a literary coterie. But these were matters of individual taste. There could be no objection to the fundamental purpose of concentrating attention on the poem for its own sake, of equipping the reader with the means of close and loving attention to poetry as poetry. In the second edition this purpose has been reinforced and solidified, so that the result is an even more usable and richer book than the first version. The edition of 1938 had a tentative quality that marked it as partly experimental, but the present issue of *Understanding Poetry* is in many ways a sounder performance.

It is useless to discuss what every teacher can see for himself, but a partial bill of particulars is in order. The questions and exercises have been expanded and strengthened, and this feature alone will raise the estimation of the book in the minds of many teachers. The division between pure and implied narrative has been eliminated, I think very wisely, for it was a ticklish point to handle in the teaching. The excellent long analyses, as of "The Three Ravens" and "Patterns," have been retained, since they were among the strongest features of the original text.

In some of the questions at the ends of the poems, one notes an attempt to escape in part from the charge of preoccupation with poetry as pure rhetoric. For instance, in the study topics for "Ulysses" the editors raise the question whether Ulysses patronizes his wife and his son; in this instance, and in others, they have relaxed their concentration on technique. The implication that poetry involves the human as well as the formal problem brings a gain in scope of interpretation.

The destruction of weak and ineffective poems continues merrily in this second edition. This feature was perhaps the most radical departure from standard procedures; like Boileau, Professors Brooks and Warren seem to have become critics partly through hatred of bad poetry. And in so far as the New Criticism can be termed a new neo-classicism, this text can serve as a weapon against the Edgar Guests of the literary world. The section on metrics deserves a word, too, for it is a good antidote to the type of poetry teaching which insists on the memorizing of metrical definitions and on the mechanical chopping of lines into entities known as "feet." The relation of metrics to tone and purpose is a valuable and necessary concept for the genuine understanding of the nature of poetry.

The section on tone still is the most controversial part of the book, in the opinion of this reviewer. Irony remains the favorite literary emphasis of the editors, and sometimes this emphasis results in distortion. One sees the preference for irony in the discussion of Ransom's "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter," but some readers might feel that Milton's sonnet to Catherine Woodcock, a non-ironic poem on the same theme, was even a stronger poem and deserving of a place beside the more "precious" piece by Ransom. The same criticism could be advanced against the emphasis on paradox and understatement. But in defense of the editors one might say that this insistence on paradox and irony is a necessary corrective to the vague sentimentalism that formerly characterized so much poetry teaching. Even if it does occasional injustice to works, like romantic poetry, written in periods when irony was out of fashion, still one can hardly blame the editors for partly following and partly creating the taste of the present time.

Finally, certain new sections have been added to this second edition, with consequent enlargement of the usability of the book. There is a group of poems for further study, without question, a wise feature that leaves much to the insight and skill of the individual teacher. There is a section, perhaps the most obviously "new critical" in the whole volume, on ambiguity, added dimension and submerged metaphor, for the advanced student. These two sections would have to be taught together to realize the full advantage of both.

In fact, one of the chief attractions of *Understanding Poetry* is the endless possibilities of combining and recombining poems and critical passages for maximum teaching effectiveness. With these two sections a third might profitably be studied, that which deals with the creation of poems. But even without these final sections the text offers a sound and fruitful approach to the understanding of poetry and its nature.

PAUL R. REYNOLDS
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, Rhode Island

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Meteors in December

"This is probably the most carefully guarded secret in the trade," I said to Willett.

Having to cut him in on it had left me uneasy, even though he was now our chief editor. And the possible threat from Follinsby, who had recently resigned the job and gone over to Heil and Faraday, was anything but a source of comfort.

In a side glance I caught Willett's look of impatience and remembered I had said that before. I let up a little on the accelerator.

"One word dropped carelessly," I said, "and *ppfft!* — we'd lose thousands of dollars and half our publishing prestige."

"I should think it would be worth even more," countered Willett, "to publicize the truth, since the truth is so much more sensational."

"It would — except *she* doesn't think so."

"Well, how about letting it leak out discreetly?"

Almost unconsciously I jammed on the brakes. There was a squeal of tires behind, and then a new comet went by, equipped with a firetail of Sunday school terms that, since it wasn't Sunday, I preferred to ignore.

"Don't even *think* of it! She'd never publish another line."

I allowed the car to roll off the pavement, and stopping it on the shoulder, picked up the map. I quickly found Northampton, now well behind us, and the black route-line bearing an encircled figure nine.

"That was Hadley we just went through," said Willett.

"Which means we soon turn off No. 9 and make the approach from a side road," I said. "Hers is the last house at the edge of town."

"I suppose you've been there before, Mr. Harpert?"

"Follinsby and I picked up the manuscripts for her last two, *Bars of Harmony* and *Unpublished Poems*. My father and my grandfather the ones before that."

"Incredible. How old did you say she is?"

I felt almost sullen at being required to answer such a question. So I grumped. "She would be 120 now if you can believe the textbooks."

I put the car in gear and pulled back onto the road. A succession of angry hornbarks greeted us as another comet swished by, gaining rapidly on its mate. Under my breath, I said, "Damned space-ships."

Willett could follow a line of thought. "*Would be?*" he repeated.

"*Is.* Even I find it hard to believe." I reminded myself to keep close lookout for a certain gravel side road.

"And she's still conceiving her breathless ecstasies, her scintillating microcosms — still being coy among the domesticities and the immensities?"

I broke mental stride for a moment to glance at Willett. He was playing it straight. Reassured, I said: "Yes. And that's what puts such a burden on Harpert, Cole and Company. On you and me."

He nodded. "I did my Master's dissertation on her poetry back at Rutgers."

"Gad, this will be an experience for you then."

It was not more than ten minutes till we came to the gravel road I was looking for. We wound along it for about a mile, crossed a creek near a clump of willows, and started up a small rise. Half way up, I took to the side of the road and switched off the motor.

"Now we'll walk," I said. "Precaution, you know. Parked car with out-of-state license arouses *curiosis morbidinis* in these rocky little New England towns."

It was a warm, early afternoon in late September, an afternoon of bright sunlight, clear except for a faint, milky haze that suggested the first days of autumn. When we arrived at the top of the rise, I pointed to the house. It stood on the near side of the next slope and was almost shut off from view by a dense growth of tall shrubs and overspreading trees that entirely surrounded it and that partially obscured the familiar faded white paling fence.

"This is not the big house they lived in when her father was a pillar of the town," I explained.

"No," said Willett. "I remember pictures of the family mansion. Very impressive."

"I wonder if Carlo is still alive."

I really didn't expect Willett to know who Carlo was, until I remembered about his Master's dissertation.

"Carlo? Not the big dog she was so fond of?"

"Yes. He was still there six years ago."

"*But not the original?*"

It was like the question about her age. "How should I know?" I snapped.

At the old wooden gate, we paused and handkerchiefed our brows. Then I slid back the creaking bolt. We heard a couple of feeble growls, but they immediately died out in seeming regret at having opened the issue. The immense doghouse stood well inside of the fence a little to our right, where I had remembered it, and Carlo's sad head lay flat in the doorway between his extended front paws.

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Meteors in December

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As we went up the heavily shaded brick walk — we were now abruptly in dense, cool shade — a squirrel chattered his disapproval not many boughs overhead. Behind a curtained window something white stirred. At the same time a decrepit, wizened old man wearing gloves, a battered straw, and holding a garden trowel, appeared fugitively at the side of the house and quickly withdrew.

I clacked the knocker and we stood there waiting. Willett was fidgety and I wondered just how well he realized the high privilege that was ours. Of course, it was true that he might be skeptical of everything. Indeed, I had to admit that an absence of skepticism on his part might well indicate a lack of sanity. I started to address a remark to him, hoping for a better chance to judge his expression, but at that moment the door opened.

It was the old man we had glimpsed a few minutes before at the side of the house. He had discarded the gloves and the trowel, but held the old straw in his hand as he came to a standstill squarely in the doorway. I mentioned our names and business, but he only blinked and raised his eyebrows in a futile endeavor at recognition.

"Don't you remember me?" I pleaded. "I was here for her last two manuscripts — in '34 and again in '44."

The poor old man only looked bewildered. I drew out a letter from my inner coat pocket and handed it to him.

He held it at several different distances till he got the range. "Ah, my handwriting," he said with an apologetic smile. "Emmy was always too shy to address her letters. Come in, gentlemen."

Passing through the small hallway, we were shown into a dim, musty parlor and told to be seated. Everything, I noted, was just as I had remembered it, even to the three-part screen standing in front of a doorway leading to another room, which I had once surmised to be an alcove. The old man glanced questioningly in its direction, and our gaze followed his expectantly.

But no prompting was vouchsafed him. After looking at us and then at the screen and back again at us, he evidently decided to ad lib. "I'll tell Emmy you're here," he said.

His bony fingers rolled the rim of his old straw into a tight coil as he turned and shuffled to the hallway and disappeared. We heard a low exchange of voices and then a rustle behind the screen. Instantly the white edge of a floor-length dress swept into view at the side of the screen, and the top of a head of parted-in-middle straight white hair, adorned by a pale pink aster, showed above it. Then we heard her voice — from behind the screen.

"I hope Carlo didn't alarm you, Mr. Harpert. He is, poor dog, one of the few who understand." The voice was definitely old in timbre, but still possessed remarkable firmness and modulation.

"Oh, no," I said, "not at all. But it is splendid to hear you so well — I hope you are."

"Almost as well as when I was a third as wise."

The top of her head was no longer visible, though a portion of the hem of her white dress lay on the floor beside the screen, suggesting that she had seated herself on a chair.

I felt a sudden sympathy for the bewildered Willett, who, I noticed, sat on the edge of his seat. He had quite possibly been expecting her entrance and had kept himself in readiness to rise. Or he might have been expecting to be let through the floor. I had done little, I confess, to cushion his amazement.

"And where is Follinsby?" asked the Voice. "His face was always a clear cup of water in a turgidity of soup."

"Follinsby left our employ only a month ago. I've brought along a beaker of wine instead — our new chief editor, Mr. Willett."

"Only a little roiled, I noticed from my window. As an editor, Mr. Willett, remember always, 'In the beginning was the Word.'"

Willett surprised me by coming through handsomely.

"I will treasure your reminder," he said, bowing.

"I hope you have many words for us," I suggested.

"I do," she said, more softly. "A thick sheaf." Her voice at once expressed and repressed her eagerness. There was a quick rustling of paper. "Would you — but, no, of course you wouldn't — want me to read a few?"

"But we would," Willett and I said in unbridled unison like story-book children. In his excitement Willett had actually got to his feet and only gradually sat down again.

"Well," she said, "this one is called 'The Tax Upon Existence.'"

We all but held our breath.

The tax upon existence
Was all that I could pay
They added then the surtax
And took the rose away.

Bleak heaven came down about me
And barter crazed the sting
Till I remembering David
Stood up and drew my sling.

"Superb," I gasped.

"Amazing," said Willett.

"Give us more," I begged.

Just then the old man appeared in the hall doorway. He halted there with two glasses of shining clear water in his hands, but turned quickly away with them when the poet seemed about to read another.

"This one I called 'Poem,' but as a title it was too modern, so I discarded it. I hope you don't mind untitled poems."

I wanted to say I cheered her decision, but she began directly to read.

I caught the skein of living
And wound it in a ball
So huge I had not used it half
When history came to call.

It bade me then to follow
But love had paged me too
And history assumed, forgot
With wars and crowns to do.

So dappled like the seasons
I dread its mastiff eye
Though soft my love has joined me
And we together lie.

I felt hushed all over as she finished. Something, something abou it was troubling my mind. I looked at Willett and saw that he too wa moved and evidently puzzled. The image of the old man disappearin with two glasses of water came to me.

"Magnificent," I said. "Miss Dee, could that poem possibly be — *true*?"

It was irrevocably the wrong word. The silence was boreal.

"I never knew a poem that wasn't true," she said at last.

"Read us more," Willett urged, with perfect timing.

"Yes, do," I added, my zest somewhat artificial.

There was some rustling of paper, then more rustling. Finall she announced: "I call this one 'B-29'."

"B-29!" I laughed lightly. It was too incongruous. "Of course w couldn't print it — an anachronism like that. There were no B-29's i your day. I mean before 1886."

Though her voice was old, I found it could be crisp. "This poem Mr. Harpert, is about bees in a clover field."

"Oh, oh," I said, anguished. "I beg your pardon. Please forgive m Miss Dee. But *couldn't* you change it to 'Bee 64' or 'Bee 87'? 'Bee 2 has bombing connotations from two wars."

"No," she answered.

It seemed to me that she wasn't quite so shy as she was famed t be, deceiving elf.

"Do read it anyhow," I said. "I'm sure we'll love it."

After what I felt as a chastening pause, she read gayly as follow

The clovers number all the bees
And load them with their balm
And send them buzzing off the field
To agitate the calm.

Ecstatic in their vertigo
Beneath a vibrant line
I've known them dock their leaves and call,
'There goes Bee 29!'

Willett smiled broadly, but I saw at once that it wouldn't d Readers would never believe it was written before the day of B-29 Yet it was unthinkable to argue with the greatest woman poet American literature from Anne Bradstreet to Helen Bevington. I mad a mental note to omit it by editorial oversight when the work wou be sent to the printer.

"Most delightful, Miss Dee," I assured her. "But now I'm afra we must be going. Got to get back to New York tonight."

Instantly the old man reappeared carrying the two glasses water. Willett seemed caught in a strange excitement. His forehe was tensed, and his quickly shifting glance told, not of an observi eye, but of an inner conflict.

After we drank we returned the glasses to him and he took the away. The fear occurred to me that Willett might blurt out somethi that would shatter the whole delicate arrangement.

"Have you the manuscript ready?" I asked briskly.

"Yes, *he* will give it to you," answered Miss Dee. "I want you t call it *Meteors in December*. Have you left my honorarium?"

"*He* will give it to you," I said, not without misgivings about fi thousand dollars being called an honorarium.

The old man, bearing the manuscript, had appeared in the doorwa I received it from him and handed him, as specified in Miss De letter, five hundred ten-dollar bills. But I didn't get Willett out in tim Aghast, I heard him call out with desperate audacity.

"And is *he* the lover, Miss Dee, that the world has speculate about but can't identify?"

I turned on Willett, ready to tear him limb from limb and thro the bones to Carlo. But there was quick tenderness in her voice s she answered softly, "Yes, he is the lover."

I was silenced before I could speak. But Willett was not satisfie with half a victory.

"My God, Miss Dee!" he cried. "May we not some day tell th world who he is? Is he Wadsworth? Hunt? Gould? Which of the thre is he?"

There was hesitation and a tantalizing smile in her voice whe she spoke.

"Some day, when history has returned and gathered up its stray you may tell them his name. His name is — Abernethy."

Half dazed, unrecognizing, amid what must have been farewell we got somehow out of the door, past Carlo's discounted growl, pa the squirrel's reproof and beyond the gate's creak. Just as it ha happened to me twice before, there was only the preposterous manu script under my arm to keep me feeling all right about myself, and could only guess that Willett, despite his crown of wild olive, mu have felt the same way.

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